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ABSTRACT

The language development processes of decreolization and second language acquisition are compared. The decreolization of Guyanese creole negation and the acquisition of the English negative by an adult Spanish speaker are described. Each process is seen as a series of internal changes on a continuum of developmental stages which bring speakers progressively closer to a model. A strong link is suggested between adult language acquisition processes and degree and strength of culture contact. (JB)

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An Exploratory Analogy Between Decreolization and Second Language Acquisition: Negation[1]

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Introduction

This paper deals with an exploratory analogy between decreolization and second language acquisition of English negation. Its goals are to present a description of the mechanisms of change involved in decreolization; to compare these mechanisms with those exhibited in second language acquisition; and to speculate on the factor(s) influencing the linguistic development in both processes.

The Decreolization of Guyanese Creole Negation

Decreolization is the process whereby a creole language incorporates more and more features of the standard 'model' language. Bickerton (1975) describes the decreolization of the Guyanese creole negation system in terms of a continuum which represents a series of developmental stages from Guyanese creole to Standard Guyanese English.

The overall movement along the continuum involves a rule change from pre-verbal negation to post-verbal negation. This rule change is accomplished by the mechanisms of replacement and restructuring. In replacement, morphemes of non-standard appearance are replaced by others which on the surface and later in the underlying structures resemble morphemes of Standard Guyanese English. Restructuring involves the

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[1] Revised version

reformulation of the underlying representation of grammatical structures in order to achieve conformity with the 'model' language. This continuum can be schematized as follows:

Guyanese creole	Basilect	Lower Mesolect	Mid Mesolect	Upper Mesolect	Acrolect	'model' English

The terms Basilect, Mesolect and Acrolect are used by Bickerton to refer to different segments along the continuum. Basilect refers to the segment which is furthest from the Standard Guyanese English and is earlier in development than the other segments. Acrolect refers to the Standard Guyanese English and Mesolect refers to all intermediate variations. Lower Mesolect is the part closest to the Basilect and Upper Mesolect is closest to the Acrolect. The part equidistant in terms of the rule change from Basilect to Acrolect is referred to as Mid Mesolect.

Basilectal Phase

The Basilect is characterized by a Basilect-creole pre-verbal insertion of the general negator NA:

Yu na taak tu di man neks de?
/=Didn't you talk to the man the next day?/

The negator NA is placed in a position immediately between the grammatical subject and the verb phrase.

But, in this phase, kyaan and mosn - English can't and mustn't, have been innovated into the Basilect modelled on the Standard English forms and are variants of NA + kyan/mos. This variation can be seen in the following examples:

Hu na kyan afood it.
/= Those who can't afford it./

Bod an ting na mos pik am.
/= Birds and such mustn't eat them./

In variation with:

Yu kyaan go intafeer wit awi.
/= You can't go and interfere with us./

Wen reen faal, mosn ketch waata.
/= When it rains, it mustn't get wet./

These innovations, kyaan and mosn serve to introduce the Basilect speakers to the Standard English post-verbal negation rule which consists of copula/auxiliary + negator constructions. The variation in forms between NA + kyan/mos and kyaan or mosn indicates that the rule change from pre-verbal negation to the 'model' Standard English post-verbal negation is in progress as there will be fluctuation between structures in the process of change.

From Basilect to Mesolect

In the development from Basilect to Mesolect, the Basilect negator NA begins to disappear and is replaced by other negative forms such as:

en - from English ain't and/or haven't
doon(t) - English don't
di(d)n(t) - English didn't
dozn(t) - English doesn't
izn(t) - English isn't
wazn(t) - English wasn't

These forms are in a sense derived from the English forms. But, at this phase, doon(t) - English don't, does not have a positive do form therefore, the speakers cannot analyze doon(t) into underlying do + not. Yet, it is one of the most common negators which is used in all tense references in the Mesolect phase. Also, did does not function as an auxiliary in questions or as a carrier of tense as in the Standard 'model' English. So negative di(d)n(t) is not necessarily the negative of did. Dozn(t) - English doesn't, is also in var-

iation with NA + doz. The use of these unanalyzed forms are exemplified below:

Well, we en understand because we were small.

/= well we didn't understand because we were small./

But when I was a girl growing up, I hear them talking this language. We don't understand it. They talk in African twang. I don't know it.

/= But when I was a girl growing up, I heard them talking this language. We didn't understand it. They talked in African twang. I didn't know it./

But they didn't had it.

/= But they didn't have it./

Some don't wore a shoe before coming here.

/= Some didn't wear shoes before coming here./

This evidence seems to support the assumption that at this phase there is no DO -Support rule functioning as in the Standard 'model' language which would move the underlying DO auxiliary to the left of the subject noun phrase in questions, nor one which would insert the negative particle NOT between the auxiliary DO and the verb. For this reason, it would seem as though these sentence negators are insoluble and were innovated into the negation system as single monomorphemes which simply replace NA without their Standard English functions.

In this phase, the pre-verbal negation rule still dominates but Bickerton suggests that the rule that sharply differentiate the Basilect from the Standard Guyanese English or Acrolect begin to weaken as one advances along the continuum toward the 'model' language.

From Mesolect to Acrolect

In the developmental stage from Basilect to Mid Mesolect, there was a large introduction of forms modelled on Standard 'model' English forms. As we shall see, in the Upper Mesolect to Acrolect, there is a change in the nature of the mechanism used. The negative forms are in-

corporated into the grammar in pretty much their Standard English functions, while non-standard forms either drop out altogether or are reformulated into structures that are closer to Standard English.

The non-past negative reference is exclusively carried by don't and doesn't and past reference by didn't. This usage is exemplified below:

When he {doesn't / don't} make money.

Those who don't make money. [= same as in Standard English]

Therefore, I didn't go.

So rather than still functioning as single monomorphemes, the above forms seem to be now functioning as Standard English DO auxiliary - carrier of tense and negative particle NOT.

Also by this phase, non-standard en negator is eliminated.

Since the speakers along the continuum are attempting to acquire the post-verbal negation rule of the 'model' language - English, the non-standard forms which are not produced by this rule will be eliminated. In this case, the Basilect-creole negator NA and the non-standard EN are eliminated. Thus, the pre-verbal negation rule is no longer productive and eventually drops out. At the same time, the forms that do not belong to the existing copula/auxiliary + negator paradigm which is governed by the new post-verbal negation rule are restructured. Therefore, the monomorphemes doon(t), dozn(t) and di(d)n(t) are restructured into DO auxiliary - carriers of tense and negation in order to achieve conformity with the 'model' English negation system. Hence, by the Acrolect phase, the rule change and the restructuring of the underlying units seem to have taken place in order to accommodate the input from the 'model' Standard English.

Therefore, the output is produced according to the new negation rule which is essentially identical with that of standard speakers of English.

Comparison of Jorge's Second Language Development and Decreolization

Bickerton speculates that in the course of decreolization, speakers can be placed along the continuum between the creole language and the standard 'model' language in much the same way as second language learners can be place along the continuum between LANGUAGE 1 and LANGUAGE 2. In each case, the successive stages on the continuum constitute hypothetical grammars of the 'model' language.

This comparison focuses on a ten-month longitudinal study of a native Spanish speaker, Jorge, during his acquisition of English as a second language.[1] Since his development of English negation exhibited characteristics of the mechanisms of change involved in the process of decreolization, this motivated me to compare both processes.

For the sake of description, the non-discrete stages (see Table 1) were defined according to the introduction of negative forms, the elimination of non-standard negative forms and according to the most dominant negating devices exhibited during that period.

Thus, the development of the English negation evidenced by the subject, Jorge, was characterized by the following features.

Jorge's Stage 1

Stage 1 which is from tape 1-4 is characterized by:

A. NO + Any Verb constructions

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[1] The data from this ten-month longitudinal study was provided by J. Schumann which was part of a project undertaken by Cazden, Cancino, Rosansky and Schumann in 1975. I am grateful to him for the use of this data.

Jorge's Negation Development

	Negating Devices / TAPES	Total # negatives	NO + Any Verb	NO + Phrases	unanalyzed don't doesn't + Main V (all tenses)	NOT + Phrases	unanalyzed can't	will + don't	standard cop/ aux + negator (present tense)	standard cop/ aux + negator (past tense)	unanalyzed didn't + Main V (V past tense)	will + not	analyzed can + not	DO Aux: doesn't/ don't + simple V	DO Aux: didn't + simple V
STAGE I	1	6	50%		33%				17%						
	2	8	50%	50%											
	3	20	100%												
	4	2	50%	50%											
STAGE II	5	75	27%	12%	37%	5%	19%								
	6	3			100%										
	7	66			77%	3%	8%	3%	9%						
	8	56	2%	4%	73%		9%	4%	7%	2%					
STAGE II	9	44	2%	5%	7%	2%	16%	2%	13%		7%	7%		34%	6%
	10	33			3%	9%	18%		12%	3%				30%	24%
	11	50	6%	6%	8%	1%			0%				14%	38%	22%
	12	29							11%				3%	55%	31%
	13	24			4%	8%			5%				8%	46%	29%
	14	48			10%	15%			7%	2%			6%	42%	19%
	15	30			3%	3%			26%		3%	7%	7%	33%	17%
	16	20		10%		5%			25%	5%			15%	35%	5%
	17	81			1%	4%			16%	6%	4%	9%	6%	42%	12%
STAGE III	18	58							11%	10%	7%	2%	17%	44%	9%
	19	41				2%			10%	10%		12%	10%	29%	27%
	20	54				11%			11%	2%		15%		48%	13%

The proportion of each negating device in proportion to the total number of negatives in each tape sample.

No is necessary.
[= It is not necessary.]

The glass no will break.
[= The glass will not break.]

She no want outside.
[= She doesn't want (to go) outside.]

She no saw him.
[= She didn't see him.]

At this stage, Jorge's negation rule can be described as NO placed between the grammatical subject and the verb phase, in other words, a pre-verbal negation rule. Of the total negating devices used between tapes 1-4, 50% and better were of the NO + Any Verb constructions.

B. Overt variation

He is [a] not fat.
[= He is not fat.]

Don't like?
[= subject asked if "no le gusta" ="don't like".]

Tape 1 exhibits variation, even though minimal, between the NO + Any Verb constructions and the unanalyzed don't and copula/auxiliary + negator constructions. Since variation indicates change in progress, we can expect to find internal change occurring in order to eliminate the variation and achieve conformity with the 'model' language.

This stage seems to resemble the Guyanese Basilect phase as previously described which is also characterized by a single negation rule along with overt linguistic variation. (Even though the description of the decreolization of Guyanese creole did not allow for comparison of the development of negated noun, adjectival and adverbial phrases, it was included in Table 1 as supportive evidence of the kind of linguistic development exhibited in second language acquisition).

Early Stage II

A. Innovation of unanalyzed don't and unanalyzed can't

In the development from Stage I to Early Stage II, beginning at tape 5, the form don't was innovated into the negation system to negate main verb constructions appearing in both present and past tenses:

I don't want some candy.
[= I don't want any candy.]

I don't likes to study.
[= I don't like to study.]

I don't saw him last week.
[= I didn't see him last week.]

At this stage, don't seemed to be innovated as a learnt chunk or monomorphemic variant of Stage I's NO. It did not seem to consist of English DO auxiliary - carrier of tense and negation because it was applied in both present and past tense utterances. Also, its variants - doesn't and didn't were not used by Jorge in his speech samples until tape 7, for doesn't and tape 9, for didn't. These unanalyzed don't + main verb construction dominated until tape 9.

Also at this stage, the modal - can't was used by Jorge beginning at tape 5. It was used only in this single form:

I can't understand.
The dog can't bark. [= same as in English]

According to transformational grammar, a form is acquired in its positive form and then negated according to the productive negation rule as were the other auxiliaries. But, in the early samples, can't seemed to be a learnt chunk meaning 'unable to' since its positive form - can was not used by Jorge in his speech samples until tape 6.

There is no change in the negation rule at this period in Stage II because the NO and the unanalyzed don't constructions which are produced by this rule are still present and productive. But, the forms which differentiated Jorge's Stage I from the 'model' English begin to weaken the productivity of the pre-verbal negation as Mid Stage II is approached.

Mid Stage II

The negator begins to be placed after the copula and auxiliary forms beginning at tape 7.

A. Copula/auxiliary + negator constructions (present tense)

From tape 7-9, the present tense modal - will was negated with the use of don't as the post-verbal negator. Since will was previously negated as NO + will, this seems to be sound evidence that these structures are being produced through the addition of the 'model' English post-verbal negation rule. But at this stage, don't is still being employed as a general unanalyzed negator:

I will don't see you tomorrow.
/= I will not see you tomorrow./

She'll doesn't come.
/= She will not come./

Standard copula/auxiliary + negator constructions:

He is not hungry.

The baby is not crying.

I'm not old enough.

Thus, the addition of the 'model' English post-verbal negation rule is further evidenced by the use of the standard copula/auxiliary + negator constructions also beginning at tape 7.

With the innovation of the above copula/auxiliary + negator con-

structions, there seems to be two negation rules in conflict - a pre-verbal negation rule and a post-verbal negation rule. Since a system strives to maintain unity and simplicty, one of the negation rules will be dropped so that all negative forms can be produced by a single negation rule. In addition, since the learner is also striving to acquire a system like the 'model' language, one can predict that the non-standard pre-verbal negation rule will be eliminated from the system.

Also at this stage, the unanalyzed variant of don't - doesn't, is used by Jorge beginning at tape 7:

She doesn't like it.
[= same as in English]

She'll doesn't come.
[= She will not come.]

The girl doesn't ate some soup.
[= The girl didn't eat any soup.]

Thus far, Jorge's negation development seems to exhibit similar mechanisms to those exhibited in the Basilect to Mesolect phase in decreolization. For instance, the replacement of NO by unanalyzed don't or doesn't before main verb constructions in all tenses and after the auxiliary will, and the replacement of NO by post-verbal position NOT in copula/auxiliary constructions, these all serve as evidence in the form of variation for the rule change from pre-verbal negation to 'model' English post-verbal negation.

Late Stage II

A. The elimination of the non-standard forms and the innovation of the past/present tense distinctions among the negative forms

In the development from Mid Stage II to Late Stage II, tapes 8-18, there is total elimination of the non-standard NO + Any Verb constructions which occurs by tape 11. Therefore, the pre-verbal negation rule

loses its productivity and is dropped from the grammar.

This stage is also characterized by the innovation of the present/past tense distinction among the negative forms. Beginning at tape 8, the past tense copula/auxiliary forms are exhibited as in:

He wasn't talking to the teacher.

But we couldn't do anything. /= same as in English./

We weren't there.

Won't is used for past tense wouldn't:

He won't drink his milk.

Also beginning at tape 9, past tense unanalyzed didn't was used by Jorge as in the following examples:

Mary didn't saw him.
/= Mary didn't see him./

I didn't went to Costa Rica.
/= I didn't go to Costa Rica./

This use of unanalyzed didn't with the past tense main verbs results in more variation because now there are two possiblities for past tense reference involving main verbs - unanalyzed don't + main verb in the past tense or unanalyzed didn't + main verb in the past tense. In addition, those non-standard unanalyzed forms are already in variation with the standard DO auxiliary forms which are do, does, did + not plus the simple verb form. So from this, it seems that restructuring has already begun which consists of reformulating the unanalyzed don't, doesn't and didn't forms into DO auxiliary - carriers of tense and negation.

From tape 9 on, all negative forms of DO were considered analyzed unless they were of the non-standard constructions. Following are some examples of the standard DO auxiliary constructions:

I don't like to write much.

He doesn't ride bicycles. /= same as in English/

She didn't see nobody.

/= She didn't see anybody./

The rule change to 'model' English post-verbal negation is further exemplified by the elimination of the non-standard will + don't at tape 9 and unanalyzed can't at tape 10 and the use of will/can + not:

The glass will not break.

I can not understand. /= same as in English/

This rule change accompanied by the restructuring of underlying unanalyzed forms is also characteristic of the decreolization of Guyanese negation from Upper Mesolect to Acrolect as previously described.

Stage III

The development from Late Stage II to Stage III, tapes 19-20, is characterized by the final elimination of the non-standard forms and the establishment of the analyzed DO auxiliary forms - do, does, did as carriers of tense and negation.

By this stage, in order to accommodate the linguistic input, the subject's earlier pre-verbal negation rule has been dropped with the addition of the 'model' English post-verbal negation rule along with the restructuring of the underlying unanalyzed forms. These mechanisms of change seem to coincide with those exhibited in the development of Guyanese English negation in the process of decreolization. Therefore, from the previous comparison in which a negation rule changes by way of replacement and restructuring, Jorge's negation development can be schematized as follows:

'native'		Early	Mid	Late		'model'
	StageI	Stage II	Stage II	Stage II	Stage III	
Spanish	Basilang	Lower Mesolang	Mid Mesolang	Upper Mesolang	Acrolang	English

In conclusion, it seems from this investigation that a second language learner of English negation in a natural environment, i.e. without formal instruction, acquires this system in accordance with basic mechanisms of change. Jorge's language exhibited a development which was governed by the replacement of forms and the restructuring of underlying units which resemble the development exhibited in decreolization. This seems to indicate that decreolization and second language acquisition exhibit manifestations of the same kind of linguistic development toward a 'model' language.

In order to account for Jorge's linguistic development and that exhibited in decreolization, internal and external factors were considered.

Since the kind of linguistic development evidenced in decreolization and second language acquisition is a development toward a 'model' language, one finds a series of internal changes occurring within the learner's language as he strives to reach conformity with the 'model' language. These internal changes produce a continuum of developmental stages each closer than its antecedent toward the 'model' language.

But it seems to me that this is not a sufficient explanation for the type of linguistic development involved in decreolization and second language acquisition simply because not all learners advance to the level on the continuum.

Research (Alleyne, 1971) has shown that linguistic adaptation, in this study, decreolization and second language acquisition, may be seen as one instance of a very general process of cultural adaptation.

As a general rule, the degree of closeness of contact with the 'model' language group correlates with the degree of acculturation. So persons in close contact with the 'model' language group will achieve a high level of accurate performance of the 'model' culture in general and a high level of accuracy in the reproduction of the structural patterns of the 'model' language.

Therefore, in order to better understand the kind of linguistic development exhibited in decreolization and second language acquisition, one must see it as part of cultural adaptation so external factors must be considered. From this, it seems plausible to suggest that the factors which I have considered, namely, the internal linguistic development toward a target and the external degree of contact, i.e. acculturation, with the 'model' language group, both combine to give us the cause of the linguistic development involved in the processes of decreolization and second language acquisition. We can then speculate that the degree to which a learner acculturates to the 'model' language group will correlate with and account for the degree of linguistic development toward the 'model' language.

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